on the basis of words: volume two

PERTAINING TO THE ORIGIN: ESPRESSO

a matter of inconsistency and double standards

from "ex," out and "primere," to press

Andrew Lehti

September the Second 2024

Abstract: Languages evolve naturally over time, reflecting cultural, social, and phonetic changes as they are spoken and written by different communities. Italian, like all Romance languages, evolved from Latin. While the focal point of this volume may appear to be on the word, espresso, it isn't. While 'espresso' is the global community standard, the correct historical, linguistic, and etymological spelling and pronunciation is actually "expresso." This reflects the word's true origins and the natural linguistic evolution that has shaped its current usage

It is likely that other English-speaking regions have had similar experiences to those described here. Notice: automatic translations of this document may lose its meaning.

A multi-volume collection, each volume focuses on a single word, offering new definitions, clarifications, or translations. Each term is explored in depth, revealing its origins, nuances, and the underlying phenomena that shape its meaning.

Main Term: espresso
Related Terms: expresso, xpresso, exprimo, exprimere, exoressus
Search Terms: how to spell espresso, how to spell expresso, how to properly spell espresso, how to properly spell expresso

 10.6084/m9.figshare.26827120

Historical Context and Origins of Espresso

The technique of extracting liquids by pressing substances dates back centuries, long before espresso was invented. Ancient civilizations, such as the Romans and Greeks, used presses to extract oils from olives, juices from fruits, and essential oils from herbs for medicinal, culinary, and cosmetic purposes. The Latin word "exprimo" described these processes of pressing or squeezing out substances and was also used metaphorically by ancient philosophers.

Espresso, as a coffee-making method, emerged in early 20th-century Italy. In 1901, Luigi Bezzera patented a machine that used steam pressure to force water through coffee grounds, a novel adaptation of the ancient concept of pressing liquids, applied to brewing coffee.

Linguistic Evolution and the Case for Localization

The term "Espresso" originates from the Italian caffè espresso, meaning "pressed coffee" or "coffee extraction." Given that English, particularly in the US. and Britain, is influenced by Latin, it could be argued that "Espresso" **would have been localized** to "Expresso," reflecting both Latin roots and common pronunciation practices, **which originally it was.**

In Latin, the verb *exprimo* (from 'ex' meaning "out of" and 'primo' meaning "to press") forms *expressus* in the supine, which in the ablative case is *expresso*. This form, *expresso*, would be the correct term to use when referring to "pressed coffee" if we adhered strictly to Latin principles.

Furthermore, the Italians adapted Latin words into Italian with modified spellings, creating equivalents that differed from the original but equal. For instance, if they assimilated English words as they exist now, they would appear as follows:

Baptize → Bapttizze
Frenzy → Frenzzi
Horizon → Horizzon
Complex → Comppless
Exorcize → Essorsizze
Expresso → Esspresso or Espresso
Rationalize → Razionalizzare

This demonstrates how languages evolve and adapt, yet in the US. and Britain there seems to be a double standard in maintaining the Italian "Espresso" rather than localizing it to Expresso. Shouldn't we follow the pattern of localization as the world does, adapting the word to better fit the linguistic practices and pronunciation norms in our local language?

Cultural Tensions and Linguistic Evolution

Throughout history, words have evolved in both form and meaning. However, tensions arise when native speakers insist on strict adherence to traditional pronunciation and spelling, often without understanding their own linguistic history. This insistence is hypocritical, and particularly when they demand others to conform to their cultural norms from their language into our own while ignoring the natural evolution of language.

About eight years ago, Americans criticized a presidential candidate for using the word "bigly." The level of criticism was unwarranted. Although not aligned with either major political party, it is important to recognize when one side is being unreasonable. English is a highly diverse language that allows for the creation of various forms from existing words. Many English speakers may not fully realize the complexity and vastness of the language, as they are typically taught only a few tenses, despite the existence of hundreds of unorganized suffixes.

Exist: base form, verb
Exist**ence**: converted from verb to noun
Existe**nt**: converted from noun to adjective
Existent**ial**: pertaining to the base adjective

English speakers often modify words in ways that may not be technically well-defined but are widely understood, such as "toughishly," "loudfully," "softily," "sadfully," and "smallishly."

Which brings to mind a parallel: some, if not most, Italians 10 to 20 years ago criticized Americans for pronouncing "espresso" with an "x," which Americans and Brits saw as pretentious from the Italians. In response, Americans and the British, fearing they might be out-pretensioned, quickly conformed.

This pressure to conform reflects a fear of change and a reluctance to embrace linguistic diversity by Italians, and a fear of not being superior, to the point of delusion, by the U.S. and Britain. These groups completely threw away their

dignity, pleasing no one. Italians demand respect for their culture, yet show little for ours or the Latin from which their words originate.

Italians refer to the U.S. invention of the "suppressor" as "soppressore," while the U.S. term remains more faithful to the Latin "suppressus" than the Italian localization. Despite this linguistic adaptation, Americans do not ridicule Italians for modifying thousands of foreign words to fit their own norms. Such adaptation is a natural part of being a global community.

However, the ridicule directed at Americans and Brits by Italians over the pronunciation of "espresso" was so prevalent that Weird Al referenced it in his 2014 song "Word Crimes," explicitly stating, "syntax you're always mangling... no x in espresso." This highlights unnecessary cultural tension and a poor understanding of language by both parties. English, rooted in Latin and influenced by Greek, uses the prefix "ex," as in "express" rather than "espress," and "extract" instead of "estract." This focus on linguistic purity overlooks the natural evolution and localization of language within a global context. The English-speaking world as a whole understood "expresso" without a second thought. The effort to halt the evolution of a single word required massive resources and stress, yet ultimately achieved nothing.

Deviations from the original occur from time to time, as seen with the word "escape." Originally "excapare" in Latin, it was simplified in Middle English to "escapen" due to the challenging 'x' and 'c' combination. However, the word still carries a slight 'x' undertone in its pronunciation in some dialects.

How Language Benefits from Adaptations

Conformity and resistance to change are deeply ingrained in Italy. For example, showing some individuals the breaking of a spaghetto might provoke a strong reaction. Which is the root of this controversy that should not be.

I am not against the Italian language, in fact, I would be welcomed to assimilate some of it into our language: the "spaghetto" is the singular form of Spaghetti, as a Spaghetto is a single noodle; this is with nouns ending in -o changing to -i in the plural, and nouns ending in -a change to -e. This linguistic structure could be adopted, and the adaptation of such plural forms, with the possessive ['s] remaining only for possession, could simplify English.

English could adopt elements of this pluralization structure to streamline the language, especially since the Latin plural form -i is already used for most words ending in -us.

base, sing.	base, poss.	base, pl.	base, pl, poss.
Piano	Piano's	Piani	Piani's
Mango	Mango's	Mangi	Mangi's
Hero	Hero's	Heri	Heri's
Potato	Potato's	Potati	Potati's
Echo	Echo's	Echi	Echi's
Taxo	Taxo's	Taxi	Taxi's
Bikino	Bikino's	Bikini	Bikini's
Spaghetto	Spaghetto's	Spaghetti	Spaghetti's
Banana	Banana's	Banane	Banane's
Idea	Idea's	Idee	Idee's
Panda	Panda's	Pande	Pande's
Drama	Drama's	Drame	Drame's
Pizza	Pizza's	Pizze	Pizze's
Phona	Phona's	Phone	Phone's
Horsa	Horsa's	Horse	Horse's
Bridga	Bridga's	Bridge	Bridge's

Shifting English in this direction makes sense, as the current use of -s for both pluralization and possession can cause confusion. For instance, when referring to something owned by multiple people named Chris: *These are the Chrises' belongings*; is awkward, whereas: *These are the Chrisi's belongings;* is phonetically clearer, well as: *The Mangi's location,* instead of: *the Mangoes' location*. However, this is not the focus of the discussion. It serves as an example of how cultures can benefit one another rather than engaging in disputes over cultural appropriation or insisting that others conform to the rules of one language.

Linguistic Purity and Cultural Exchange

Given that the Italian word "espresso" has its roots in Latin, some groups, particularly Italians and certain pretentious Americans and Brits, argue that the term should remain faithful to its original form. If that is their wish, then the original form, "expresso," should indeed be used. The English speakers who insist on preserving a culture's correct spelling and pronunciation often do so with an air of pretentiousness, seemingly forgetting that they themselves refer to the Deutsch, Deutsche, Deutschlander, and Deutschlanderinnen as "Germans" and Deutschland as "Germany" which is far more culturally insensitive than what we call a cup of coffee.

If linguistic purity were truly the goal, then the "Holy Bible" would need to be renamed "Heilig Bibel," a term that shares the same root as "Heil," as in "Sieg Heil." Those who advocate for preserving cultural authenticity are often associated with the same individuals who accuse others of cultural appropriation. In doing so, they create a social divide and inadvertently foster a form of racist ideology. The concept of cultural appropriation began with the valid criticism that 'blackface' was a harmful and offensive stereotype, a point on which everyone can agree. However, the term has since evolved, gradually shifting to make any form of cultural exchange "inappropriate."

By advocating for cultural separation, they resist the blending of traditions and identities, aiming to keep their culture isolated and unchanged. This approach prioritizes cultural purity over embracing diversity. When one culture adopts elements from another, it is the adopting culture that evolves, not the source. This compliance is dangerous, illustrating the "foot-in-the-door" technique, where initial agreement leads to gradual shifts in definition until it no longer aligns with its original meaning. This evolution has been driven by both political sides and will eventually fade, only to resurface under a new guise. *This is an intentional evolution by those that wish for this effect.*

Final Argument

One final piece of evidence challenges any refusal to accept the transition from 'espresso' to 'expresso' in English. The term and idea from which "espresso" derives was not invented by Italians, (i.e. pressed substances.)

Two thousand years ago, the Latin word "expremere" or "exprimo" was used both for "pressing" and "extracting," and metaphorically to express an idea or feeling. We use expressions to this day and we call them **expressions**. The Italians, with their localization call them: **espressioni** (espressione in singular).

Conclusion: As societies grow and interact, cultures will inevitably assimilate, and while each culture may lose some of its distinctiveness, they will collectively transform into a broader and more inclusive global culture that is ours, which will reconcile spellings to their proper forms, not just that of our ancestors. In the mean time, **there is no undoing the past**, but to look at the future with better care of our local syntax, and we shall **let 'espresso' be the reminder of ignorance and conformity shared by Italians, Americans and the Brits.**

Summary:

Language Evolution and Espresso: Languages evolve naturally, shaped by cultural and social changes. The word "espresso" is a deviation from its original Latin root "expresso," which more accurately reflects its historical and linguistic origins. The practice of pressing substances dates back to ancient civilizations, providing context for the development of the term.

Cultural Tensions and Linguistic Double Standards: "Espresso" comes from the Italian "caffè espresso," but in English, "expresso" would align better with Latin roots. Italians often adapt foreign words to fit their language but criticize others for altering "espresso." This double standard fuels unnecessary cultural tension and reveals a misunderstanding of how languages naturally adapt.

Cultural Exchange and Linguistic Purity: Resistance to blending traditions and maintaining linguistic purity hinders cultural exchange. When one culture adopts elements from another, the adopting culture evolves. The debate over "espresso" versus "expresso" highlights this issue, where the focus on purity overlooks the benefits of linguistic adaptation. In this case, the Italians have pressured non-Italian speakers into conforming by insisting that their word, "espresso," be used without alteration, effectively imposing their cultural norms on others while resisting changes to their own. The term "expresso" was widely understood and illustrates a low understanding by humans with slight linguistic deviations, which can hinder the natural evolution of language. Unlike "excapare" becoming "escapen" through natural usage, the shift from "expresso" to "espresso" was driven by external social pressure and increased ***unwarranted mockery overseas.***

further considerations:

Latin | English | Italian

Exprimere → Express → Esprimere
Expressivus → Expressive → Espressivo
Expressio → Expression → Espressione
Expressus → Expressed → Espressa
Expressus → Expresses → Esprime
Expressio → Expressing → Esprimere
Expressio → Expressionist → Espressionista
Excludere → Exclude → Escludere
Exhalare → Exhale → Espirare
Excitare → Excite → Eccitare
Exemplum → Example → Esempio
Extradere → Extract → Estrarre
Exponere → Expose → Esporre
Exilium → Exile → Esilio
Exemptio → Exemption → Esenzione
Excerptum → Excerpt → Estratto
Exquisitus → Exquisite → Squisito
Expandere → Expand → Espandere
Expatriatus → Expatriate → Espatriato
Exclamare → Exclaim → Esclamare
Extrapolare → Extrapolate → Estrapolare
Expressō → **Espresso?** → Espresso

Expressō is the ablative form of expressus, which is the past participle of the verb exprimo:
(expremere → expressus → expressō)